

Agri-cultural Department.

Conducted by ALBERT CHAPMAN.

The Tariff on Wool.

LETTER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOOL MANUFACTURERS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL WOOL-GROWERS ASSOCIATION, MEETING AT ST. LOUIS, OCTOBER 2, 1877.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOOL MANUFACTURERS, Boston, Mass., Sept. 25, 1877.

GENTLEMEN, The Executive Committee of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers have been apprised by your President, Mr. Garland, of the intended meeting of your Association at St. Louis, on the third of October next, and of its objects. They have also received the courteous invitation extended to the members of this Association to join your deliberations. As the annual meeting of our own Association, under the provisions of our by-laws, takes place on the day above named, we are precluded from the pleasure which some of us otherwise would certainly have indulged in, of personally conferring with you at St. Louis, on the subject of the tariff on wool. We cannot, however, permit this occasion to pass without expressing—although through the imperfect medium of a written communication—our sympathy in the objects of your Association, and our assurance that nothing on our part shall be wanting to continue the harmony established more than ten years since between the two representative bodies of the national wool industry of the United States.

It may not be without profit to consider the objects which these two Associations have in view, and the motives which have prompted, and the results which have justified our alliance. The immediate object of your Association is the extension and prosperity of the domestic wool market; that of ours, the extension and prosperity of the domestic wool manufacture. But your prosperity depends upon the success of the market for your wool, and ours depends upon an ample home supply of wool for our mills. We become thus at once, in spite of our separate organizations, identified in interest, and have for a common cause an object which we do not attempt to conceal—the securing of a national legislation which shall promote the united wool industry of the country. The alliance of the two Associations for this object has been a subject of much friendly comment. It has been characterized as an obnoxious combination, or coalition, and as an example of that form of legislative chicanery popularly known as log-rolling. Nothing can be more unreasonable than this reproach. The organization into associations of those having common objects is one of the best features of modern society. It is an evidence of social progress. Theology, medicine, science, literature, art, and the general industries, have each their associations, and no question is raised as to the right or policy of such organizations. The alliance of one associated body with another is but a complete development of the principle of association; and the alliance of interests which were formerly antagonistic, as in our case, is a proof of greater enlightenment. When it is shown that a certain body, such as the American wool, is required for our cloth mills, that the special qualities of American fleeces are essential for many of our fabrics, that a certain wool supply is indispensable for the business arrangements of the manufacturer; when, on the other hand, it is shown that a foreign market for your wools is made impossible by the expense of transportation, and foreign competition,—we thus being of necessity your only consumers; and that an intimate knowledge of the wants of the domestic manufacturer is to guide you in the selection of your flocks, and the characters which you must give to your wools,—the alliance between the domestic wool-growers and manufacturer is seen to be not only obvious and natural, but indispensable. It is an alliance only in name; it is a unity. It is a unity of two wings of one army, holding one and the same point of defense, independence, on our own soil, of the united American wool industry.

Our alliance is justified by the eminently national and useful objects which we have in view. Our nine thousand sets of woolen machinery are distributed through every state and territory of the Union. Their products are, or might with advantage be, sold to every man, woman and child of our forty million people. Wool-growing, unlike the production of any other textile material, can be advantageously pursued in every state or territory. No single industry can be mentioned so cosmopolitan in its character as that of the production and manipulation of wool, to which nations encourage, and which can be afforded with less risk of rousing sectional jealousies. Our united industry is national, because it unites the two great products of the soil of a people,—the wool of the sheep and the food of the people. It has caused our people to be more abundantly and substantially clothed than any other in the world. Without our own mills, we should not have sheep. To our nine thousand sets of machinery employed in the manufacture of wool, we owe our invaluable possession of 25,000,000 of yards of cloth; whose manufacture is the product of the wheat lands on which they are raised; whose flesh is the most nourishing of animal food; and which, by their influence in diminishing the cost of all food to our whole population, may be safely said to reimburse manifold the alleged increase cost of clothing to our people, caused by the protective duties on wool. The wool industry is a necessity for the highest national development, because in your department it promotes the highest arts of stock breeding; it is the foundation of agriculture,—a mixed husbandry; and in its pastoral form it is the pioneer to new settlements. In our department, more than any other industry, it utilizes the highest mechanical, chemical, and decorative arts, and is the inevitable precursor of a diversified manufacture, with its attendant results of wealth and culture. Thus the encouragement of a national wool industry rises above all questions of economical theory. It comes within those exceptions to the theory of free-trade, which are admitted, Mill and Bright are compelled to concede, for the necessities of a nation's existence. It is because we stand upon the high platform of national necessity that we are bold to produce our object of securing a favorable legislation for our great industry; and feel confident that neither theorists in political economy nor parties in politics, provided they are patriots, will resist the facts and arguments which our united associations can present, for the security of interests identified with the prosperity of every state and territory of our country.

Our alliance is justified by its results. To it and to our united efforts, we owe the wool and woolen tariff of 1867. This tariff has been in existence, without unfriendly modification, for over ten years,—the longest period of stable legislation that has ever blessed the wool industry of the country. Its effects upon sheep husbandry, in increasing the number of sheep, in securing the Southern herds from depredation, and in pouring in upon our shores, in developing sheep-growing in the trans-Missouri region, and on the Pacific slope, its effects upon the wool supply, and the prosperity of the woolen industry, are too manifest to require further proof. It was a Boston man who went home early in the morning, and meeting the said, reproachful eyes of his wife, apologized, "My darling, I think you'll be sorry for this when you get shober."

"My opinion is," said a philosophical old man of much experience and observation, "that any man as idle as washing-day does it out of spite."

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